

BRITZ of HEADQUARTERS

By MARCIN BARBER
ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAY WATERS

SYNOPSIS.

The story opens with a scream from Dorothy March in the opera box of Mrs. Missioner, a wealthy widow. It is occasioned when Mrs. Missioner's necklace breaks, scattering the diamonds all over the floor. Curtis Griswold and Braxton Sands, society men in love with Mrs. Missioner, gather up the gems. Griswold steps on what is supposed to be the celebrated Maharane and crushes it. A Hindoo declares it was not the genuine. An expert later pronounces all the stones substitutes for the original. One of the missing diamonds is found in the room of Elinor Holcomb, confidential companion of Mrs. Missioner. She is arrested, notwithstanding Mrs. Missioner's belief in her innocence. Meanwhile, in an up-town mansion, two Hindoos, who are in America to recover the Maharane, discuss the arrest. Detective Britz takes up the case. He asks the co-operation of Dr. Fitch, Elinor's fiancé, in running down the real criminal. Britz learns that duplicates of Mrs. Missioner's diamonds were made in Paris on the order of Elinor Holcomb. While walking Britz is seized, bound and gagged by Hindoos. He is imprisoned in a deserted house, but makes his escape. Britz discovers an inmate diamond expert whom he believes was employed by either Sands or Griswold to make counterfeits of the Missioner's gems. Griswold intimates that Sands is on the verge of failure. Two Hindoos burglarize the home of Sands and are captured by Britz. On one of them he finds a note signed by "Millicent" and addressed to "Curtis." Britz locates a woman named Millicent Delaroché, to whom Griswold has been paying marked attention. The Swami attends a ball at Mrs. Missioner's home, but learns nothing further about the diamonds. Britz disguised as a thief, visits the apartment of Millicent. He finds a box that once contained the missing diamonds, but it is empty.

CHAPTER XXII.—(Continued.)

"To head off the Hindoos," cried Britz. "Let's get a cab." But the last taxicab on the Renaissance stand had been chartered an hour before by a swarthy man who seemed to be in great haste. That much Britz learned from the Inspector in charge of the stand. Britz and Fitch rounded the corner of the hotel. Close to the curb stood a private coupe. The coachman doubtless on a long wait, was nodding sleepily. Britz jerked open a door of the carriage.

"Jump in, quick!" he cried, and Fitch, who long ago had learned to carry out Britz's suggestions without stopping to ask questions, sprang into the cab. Britz slammed the door with a violence that awoke the coachman. Before the driver could utter a word of protest the athletic detective reached the box beside him in a single leap, pushed him off with a shove that landed the amazed Jehu on his hands and knees on the sidewalk, seized the reins, snatched the whip, and put the horse to a gallop. As he sped away, he hastily changed the whip to the hand that held the ribbons, and, whipping from his pocket a card that read, "Detective-Lieutenant Britz, Police Headquarters," he flung it at the prostrate coachman with the words: "Call there tomorrow for your rig."

Then, with the horse straining at the traces in indignant surprise, Britz strove at breakneck speed down the avenue, turning sharply at the first convenient corner and heading east toward the mysterious brownstone dwelling wherein he had held his interesting interview in regard to the ways of the Orient with the Eastern sage.

The galloping horse and the swaying carriage shook the echoes of the silent streets, and at several avenue crossings traffic policemen started to halt the Central Office man. But in each instance the detective shouted: "I'm Britz, of Headquarters!" and that averted interruption as he dashed on toward the Swami's house at top speed. Arriving there, he hastily banded the ribbons to a patrolman who chanced to be at that end of the beat, and, followed closely by Fitch, he ran up the steps and pushed the button of the electric bell. Inside the house, the burr-r of the little gong sounded piercingly. Britz and Fitch listened impatiently at the outer door of the vestibule for responsive steps, but none came. Then the detective recalled the thickness of the rugs and carpets in the house, and did not at once conclude no one was within. Until he had rung the bell several times in vain he did not accept the fact that the house either was untenanted, or was occupied by persons who did not see fit to answer. A word to the bluecoat on the sidewalk, accompanied by a flash of a shield on the detective's waistcoat, had told him the visit was a matter of police business. Then Britz ran down the steps and tried the basement door. The detective was equally unsuccessful in his demands to obtain a response to his ring of the lower bell. He ran up the steps again and once more pushed the button of the electric call. No answer came. Britz turned the handle of the door. To his astonishment, it turned freely, and at a gentle push the door swung inward. The inner door of the vestibule was ajar. Britz and Fitch entered cautiously. Their feet fell silently on the heavy Oriental rug. They found themselves in complete darkness. The glimmer from the street lamp did not penetrate more than a foot or two beyond the inner door. Britz whisked out his electric torch and turned its miniature spotlight on the passage and on the area leading to the upper part of the house.

"Hello!" he called. "Is anybody there?"

Silence as heavy and oppressive as the darkness beyond the radiance of

his little pocket lamp answered him again. The two men, the detective slightly in advance, walked quickly along the hall to the door at the rear, where Britz parted the portieres and looked into the big room in which he had interviewed the Eastern scholar. Its appearance was much the same as it had been on his preceding visit, save that as his practiced eye dwelt more persistently upon it, he noted the disappearance of many small articles, particularly a porphyry Buddha that had sat within a little shrine upon the wall. The apartment had the seeming of having been subjected to a surface stripping by persons about to leave it in a hurry. Few of the solemn books that had been scattered about the room remained. Among the Oriental objects still in the room was the narghleh from which the sage was fond of drawing a smoker's consolation.

"Gone, eh?" said Fitch, in an undertone.

"Britz nodded.

"Think we had better look upstairs?" asked the doctor.

With another swift nod the detective turned on his heel and led the way from floor to floor until they reached the top of the house. They glanced into every room and explored the larger apartments thoroughly. All were empty. Here and there they found evidences of hasty packing. In various rooms were queer jumbles of the East and West—linen collars with single hairline stripes of delicate tints lay beside Oriental scraps of manifold fineness. On one rack hung a Derby hat, on another a turban like that worn by the Swami, and like the kerchief Britz had found on the fire escape of the Hotel Renaissance. One of the most interesting finds was a scimitar with a jeweled hilt and a blade of wonderful keenness. Britz drew it from its scabbard and was about to feel the edge when Fitch stopped him with a swift gesture.

"Don't touch it, Lieutenant," said the doctor. "One never knows what criminal tricks these beggars play with their weapons."

As the detective looked at him inquiringly, he added:

"A sword or dagger is as likely to be poisoned as not. In fact, they prefer poisons to straight fighting."

Convinced there was no one in the upper part of the house, the two men descended to the main floor and reentered the reception room at the rear.

"This was their den," said Britz explanatorily, as he began a closer search of the room. "We may find a trace of them in some of their papers. It's worth a few minutes to make a hunt. Get busy, doc!" And the detective rummaged through drawer after drawer, Fitch following his example. They found many unusual articles, but nothing that gave an inkling of the direction of the Hindoos' flight—for it was certain the Orientals had departed hastily, having gained their object in getting possession of the Missioner necklace. Britz had no smallest doubt the Easterners had anticipated him in the burglary of Mrs. Delaroché's apartments. He did not believe any of the low-caste Hindoos would have been skilful enough to get into the woman's rooms, so near the top of the building. In his opinion, the gems had been fished from Millicent's pillow by either the Swami or the Prince. It was typical of the clever cunning of the high-caste Orientals to take only the jewels and leave the casket under the pillow, so that Mrs. Delaroché should not miss the stones until the last moment possible. They must have picked the lock.

Britz had ended his exploration of the last table drawer, and was turning to a lacquered desk, when Fitch, with a cry of unmistakable alarm, gripped his wrist and dragged him toward the divan, and with a bound stood upon its yielding surface.

"Jump up, quick!" said the doctor, plucking at the detective's arm as he spoke.

Britz had experienced too many emergencies in his career to waste time in questions. When anyone of whose friendliness he felt sure told him to jump, run, or duck, obedience to the command was his first instinct—time enough for explanation afterward. He leaped to the springy sofa beside the physician, and turned to find the doctor's arm stretched taut, ending in a quivering forefinger that pointed at something moving across the space between the divan and door. Even as the two looked at it, the motion of the creature ceased, and two beady eyes were turned in their direction. Fitch dragged the detective to the other end of the sofa and began climbing to the top of a tall chiffonier that stood against the wall. Britz needed no further word from his friend. The physician's haste was sufficient indication that they were in grave peril, and though the tall chest of drawers made slippery climbing, he was beside the doctor with marvelous quickness. When both were safely on the top of the chiffonier, Fitch lowered a foot and with a powerful shove sent the divan a yard or more away. Then he drew his feet to the top of their perch, and gave Britz the same. That done, Fitch mopped his brow with a hand-



"Hurt Much?" Asked the Detective Coolly.

kerchief, which, crisp one instant, was limp the next.

"Pretty close call," he said; when speech was restored to him.

"What is it?" asked Britz.

"What is it?" exclaimed the doctor.

"Well, only the most dangerous thing infinite wisdom has seen fit to place in that wonderland of the East."

"Snake!" asked the detective.

"Snake!" cried Fitch. "That's not the word, man. It is the most poisonous serpent known to scientists—the terrible cobra di capello, of Hindostan. A single touch of its fangs is the beginning of the end—the way to a swift finish."

"Hurt much?" asked the detective, coolly.

"It is said to be the most frightful torture man can experience—death by a cobra's poison. Science has not yet found an antidote. If a rattler bites you, you may save your life with whisky if you get it soon enough. When a cobra sets his teeth in you, you don't have time to drink the whisky, even if the glass is at your lips, and nobody knows whether it would do any good if you had time to drink it."

A long low whistle was the detective's only expression of his appreciation of their predicament. His study of Oriental lore did not acquaint him with the characteristics of the cobra. But the doctor was a scientist, and Britz was willing to take the information on trust. It was a situation in which he felt he could afford to dispense with experimental knowledge.

The thick, beautifully rounded snake, ashen in color and sinuous of movement, apparently was not alarmed by the scramble of the doctor and the detective to the top of the chiffonier, nor even by the swing of the divan under the vigorous push of Fitch's foot. It lowered the head it had lifted a few inches from the floor, and continued its passage across the room; but a short, dry laugh from the sleuth evidently angered it more than any louder noises. It stopped midway of the room, turning its head once more toward the men on their narrow perch.

An involuntary shiver ran through Fitch, and even Britz felt a little uncomfortable under the serpent's glittering gaze. The creature coiled itself in the center of the floor, its head lifted, and those beady eyes twinkling furiously. Then began a motion of the head like that of a waterpout to a point at least knee-high of a tall man. The head bent forward slightly, and the neck on both sides distended slowly until the loose flesh formed a sort of hood behind and slightly above both sides of the narrow, wicked forehead of the serpent.

"Look!" cried Fitch. "That is the unmistakable sign of a cobra, the deadly hooded snake of India. It is like no other member of the serpent family. When you see that hood commence to come out—don't wait to see the rest."

"About how long do you think it will stay there, doctor?" asked the detective.

"Until it either gets us or forgets us," answered the physician. "The distension of the skin about the neck in that way means that the beast is angry. Once it is thoroughly aroused, it never gives up until it strikes its victim, or is killed—unless something

more startling happens to distract its attention."

"Rather looks as if we were trapped," Britz said.

"Somewhat," rejoined Fitch. "We're here to stay unless that reptile goes."

"Can we kill it, do you think?" asked the detective.

"We might if we had a machine gun—have you got a pistol?"

"I brought one into the room," answered Britz, feeling in his pockets, "but I laid it on that table when I was going through those drawers. Pretty careless, eh?"

Fitch nodded. He was racking his wits for some means of escape which meant, so far as he could see, a method of killing the snake. It seemed useless to expect help from outside the house. The door between the hall and the room in which they were was closed, and before it hung portieres heavy enough to muffle their loudest shouts. Their only probable chance of relief lay in the hope that the bluecoat would become sufficiently anxious at their failure to return and would enter the house in quest of them.

Even in that rather remote contingency, however, it was far from certain they could warn him before the cobra could glide across the room and strike him to death. No, they were thrown utterly upon their own resources. Britz agreed with the doctor on that point, as in low tones, so that they might not further inflame the serpent, they discussed their situation.

"Guess there's nothing accidental about this little sunshine being in the room," said Britz musingly. "Those Oriental strong-arms probably figured it out that one or both of us would come here, and so they arranged this pleasing little surprise party. I think it is worthy a place in the society columns as one of the successes of the season."

He made light of the danger because that was his way when he was in a particularly tight place; but he realized the peril by this time as fully as did the doctor. There was nothing humorous in the fact that all the time they were held prisoners atop the chiffonier by the gray death before them, the Hindoos were doubtless making the most of the time thus gained for escape. True, he had asked that all the ordinary avenues of escape from the city be watched, and although he took it for granted Chief Manning would carry out the request conscientiously, he was not at all confident the men sent from the Central Office and from the various precinct headquarters would be proof against the adroitness of Indian noblemen, adepts, and thugs. Moreover, it was as good as certain that the Swami, the Prince, and their followers would not seek to flee the city by any ordinary route. Britz himself, had he been free to continue the pursuit, would have looked first to the most extraordinary modes of flight compatible with practical conditions. From what he knew of the men, by this time it would not amaze him greatly to find they had left the city by airship or submarine, slightly improbable as either means of transit might have been a few years before.

"Bottled up, doc!" he exclaimed gloomily.

"That's what it looks like," accepted Fitch. "Unless," Britz continued, "we can get that gun—"

"And use it effectively," put in Fitch. "I'm something of a shot," the detective ventured, meditatively. "Maybe I could hit it, and maybe I could get that gun."

His eyes, ranging the room in the immediate neighborhood of the chiffonier, alighted upon the water pouter, a dried long, flexible rubber stem pipe. The Hindoo was stretched across the narghleh upon its mouthpiece hung over the back of a chair.

"I'll try it," said the detective, stoutly. "Give a hand here, doc!"

Fitch hooked one arm about the ornamental knob at the back of the chiffonier, and with his free hand gripped the detective's left wrist. Britz, his left hand clutching the doctor's sleeve, the toe of his left boot thrust between the chiffonier and the wall, leaned far out in an attempt to reach the tube of the water pipe. He withdrew his arm quickly, however, and gave a little nervous cough as the drab death that lay coiled in the middle of the floor straightened its sinistral length and glided swiftly across the room, then coiled itself once more directly under the spot where the detective's stretching fingers had been. Once more the head arose with that strange, sinuous, swaying motion, and it began to move slowly back and forth, while the glittering eyes seemed to shoot sparks toward the man who hung at such fearful hazard above it.

"Cool!" said Britz. "This is getting a little too close for comfort. How far can that thing stretch, doctor?"

"No higher than that," answered Fitch. "At least, I think not. I understand the cobra can strike only straight forward."

"Sure it can't make an upper cut?" inquired the sleuth.

"I'm not going to say positively. I'm not sure of anything with that kind of a brute," Fitch answered. "The best way is to take no chances. Let me have a try for the scarlet."

A bifurcated scarlet thread, the slender forked tongue of the reptile, darted in and out of its gaping jaws in a frenzied way. It was apparent to anyone—he be scientist or layman—that the serpent was in a white heat of fury. Woe betide the human flesh that came within reach of that eager, death-dealing venom.

Britz, though he was known the length and breadth of the department as the coolest proposition under Manning's command, frankly shuddered as he watched the undulating menace of the serpent's body, and the staccato play of the tongue that seemed to mock him with the deadly humor of a fiend. He was willing to risk his life, if need be, to prevent the escape of the dark, subtle enemies whose demoniacal ingenuity had caught him in such a trap, for trapped he seemed to be beyond the possibility of escape. That they had matched their cunning against his cold, hard, Occidental skill and common sense, only made him the more determined to outwit, outplay, outfight them.

"No, doc," said the detective firmly. "It was my fool carelessness that left that gun on that table, and it's up to me to get it. You hold me fast and sit tight, and if anybody gets stung, I'll be me."

Once again Britz, warily watching the snake, stretched forth his arm, stretched his fingers until he could almost feel them crack and strained his muscles almost beyond endurance, the while his nerve was subjected to the severest test of all his experience. At last he slipped the smooth amber of the pipemstem from between the tips of his first and second fingers. It was the slightest of grasps; but so steady were the nerves of the Headquarters man that although the cobra in its swaying seemed to approach ever nearer the arm and naked wrist that shrank involuntarily from the fancied death-trust of those gleaming fangs, still he did not flinch. He clung to the pipemstem, his fingers steadily drawing it toward him until he had a firm clutch on the rubber tube. Then with a powerful upward and backward heave, he regained his position on the chiffonier, the twisting hose gripped in his hand. The other end of the pipemstem still was attached to the bowl of the narghleh. As the tube festooned between the table and the chiffonier, it went close to the head of the cobra. Lightning-like, the head dashed toward it, fangs bristling, and only a quick twitch of the detective's fingers snatched the stem beyond the reach of those poison-freighted ivory needles.

That jerk freed the other end of the tube from the pipe bowl, and Britz quickly looped it in his hands. Holding both ends of the long stem, he knotted a single loop in the middle and flung it like a double lariat upon the table beside the pistol. Slowly dragging the pipemstem back, he pulled it, after several trials, about the chamber of the weapon. Then, handing one end of the tube to the doctor, Britz took hold of the other, explaining his purpose to Fitch in a few words. The detective stretched his arm away from the chiffonier at one end; the physician did the same at



"That's what it looks like," accepted Fitch. "Unless," Britz continued, "we can get that gun—"

"And use it effectively," put in Fitch. "I'm something of a shot," the detective ventured, meditatively. "Maybe I could hit it, and maybe I could get that gun."

His eyes, ranging the room in the immediate neighborhood of the chiffonier, alighted upon the water pouter, a dried long, flexible rubber stem pipe. The Hindoo was stretched across the narghleh upon its mouthpiece hung over the back of a chair.

"I'll try it," said the detective, stoutly. "Give a hand here, doc!"

Fitch hooked one arm about the ornamental knob at the back of the chiffonier, and with his free hand gripped the detective's left wrist. Britz, his left hand clutching the doctor's sleeve, the toe of his left boot thrust between the chiffonier and the wall, leaned far out in an attempt to reach the tube of the water pipe. He withdrew his arm quickly, however, and gave a little nervous cough as the drab death that lay coiled in the middle of the floor straightened its sinistral length and glided swiftly across the room, then coiled itself once more directly under the spot where the detective's stretching fingers had been. Once more the head arose with that strange, sinuous, swaying motion, and it began to move slowly back and forth, while the glittering eyes seemed to shoot sparks toward the man who hung at such fearful hazard above it.

"Cool!" said Britz. "This is getting a little too close for comfort. How far can that thing stretch, doctor?"

"No higher than that," answered Fitch. "At least, I think not. I understand the cobra can strike only straight forward."

"Sure it can't make an upper cut?" inquired the sleuth.

"I'm not going to say positively. I'm not sure of anything with that kind of a brute," Fitch answered. "The best way is to take no chances. Let me have a try for the scarlet."

A bifurcated scarlet thread, the slender forked tongue of the reptile, darted in and out of its gaping jaws in a frenzied way. It was apparent to anyone—he be scientist or layman—that the serpent was in a white heat of fury. Woe betide the human flesh that came within reach of that eager, death-dealing venom.

Britz, though he was known the length and breadth of the department as the coolest proposition under Manning's command, frankly shuddered as he watched the undulating menace of the serpent's body, and the staccato play of the tongue that seemed to mock him with the deadly humor of a fiend. He was willing to risk his life, if need be, to prevent the escape of the dark, subtle enemies whose demoniacal ingenuity had caught him in such a trap, for trapped he seemed to be beyond the possibility of escape. That they had matched their cunning against his cold, hard, Occidental skill and common sense, only made him the more determined to outwit, outplay, outfight them.

"No, doc," said the detective firmly. "It was my fool carelessness that left that gun on that table, and it's up to me to get it. You hold me fast and sit tight, and if anybody gets stung, I'll be me."

Once again Britz, warily watching the snake, stretched forth his arm, stretched his fingers until he could almost feel them crack and strained his muscles almost beyond endurance, the while his nerve was subjected to the severest test of all his experience. At last he slipped the smooth amber of the pipemstem from between the tips of his first and second fingers. It was the slightest of grasps; but so steady were the nerves of the Headquarters man that although the cobra in its swaying seemed to approach ever nearer the arm and naked wrist that shrank involuntarily from the fancied death-trust of those gleaming fangs, still he did not flinch. He clung to the pipemstem, his fingers steadily drawing it toward him until he had a firm clutch on the rubber tube. Then with a powerful upward and backward heave, he regained his position on the chiffonier, the twisting hose gripped in his hand. The other end of the pipemstem still was attached to the bowl of the narghleh. As the tube festooned between the table and the chiffonier, it went close to the head of the cobra. Lightning-like, the head dashed toward it, fangs bristling, and only a quick twitch of the detective's fingers snatched the stem beyond the reach of those poison-freighted ivory needles.

That jerk freed the other end of the tube from the pipe bowl, and Britz quickly looped it in his hands. Holding both ends of the long stem, he knotted a single loop in the middle and flung it like a double lariat upon the table beside the pistol. Slowly dragging the pipemstem back, he pulled it, after several trials, about the chamber of the weapon. Then, handing one end of the tube to the doctor, Britz took hold of the other, explaining his purpose to Fitch in a few words. The detective stretched his arm away from the chiffonier at one end; the physician did the same at

the other, and they stood in opposite directions, thus tightening the loop about the pistol. When the grip of the tube on the weapon was firm enough, it was comparatively easy to swing the revolver from the table to the chiffonier. Britz gripped the gun with an intake of breath at the betokened satisfaction.

"Now, then, doc," he said briskly. "Let's see if we can't put the revolver on that Garden of Eden spade. Here's where the rest of the woman brushes the serpent with her heel."

"I would advise you to be very cautious at long distance," said Fitch. "Unless you have more cartridges about you, I wouldn't want a shot. You won't God bless you, Britz."

Britz in all of its neutral-tinted body, his first shot went wide. The bullet imbedded itself in a leg of the table with a rasping sound that only infuriated the cobra the more. Britz's nerve slightly shaken by the miss, fired again quickly, shivered the bowl of the narghleh, and caused the snake to oscillate more and more violently. It became apparent he would gain nothing by aiming at its head.

"I'll have a try at him 'midships," he said.

Only three loaded cartridges remained in the revolver, and as Britz found no extra ones in any of his pockets, he knew he must make the most of those he had. A third time the pistol cracked. The bullet grazed the serpent's flesh. It did not injure the spine. Quickly the upraised part of the body sank upon the coil, but it reared itself again in an instant, and the furious darting of the tongue revealed that the reptile was more enraged than ever.

"Want to take a crack at it, doc?" asked the detective, handing the weapon to the physician.

Fitch had no poor idea of himself as a fancy shot, but he found his muscular control too sadly shaken by his narrow escape from the cobra's shoot straight. His shot—the fourth—was a wider miss than any of the detective's had been. He handed the pistol back to the Headquarters man and shook his head.

"You're the man to stay on the firing line," he said.

Britz eyed the revolver grimly. In its blue-steel chamber were four empty cartridges and only one that held the potentiality of release from their dangerously uncertain refuge on the chiffonier. Croaking his left arm, he used the angle made by his elbow as a rest and leveled the long blue barrel of the big-calibered weapon steadily. Pausing until the swaying of the serpent diminished as much as it apparently was going to do, he fired.

A writhing, twisting snarl was the result. The cobra coiled and uncoiled with electric rapidity, traveling in circles all over the space between the chiffonier and the table whence Britz had launched the pistol. Plainly the reptile was hit—mortally wounded, he thought, but as he started to descend impatiently, Fitch seized him and literally flung him back on the chiffonier's smooth top.

"Not yet," said the doctor, nervously. "Let's wait a minute."

It was profitable patience. For after probably a minute of terrible struggle, the cobra returned to its coil and once more reared its head. The gray body throbbled fiercely, but closer scrutiny showed the man the snake had not been hit with fatal result. Suddenly the physician seized Britz's arm in a nervous grasp.

"By Jupiter!" he exclaimed. "You've shot out its tongue!"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

"Prince John" Van Buren.

John Van Buren, son of Martin Van Buren, at one time generally known as "Prince John," having undertaken the representation as a lawyer of a certain cause before the courts, very much to the disgust of one of his friends, the latter expostulated with him in vain, and losing his temper, exclaimed:

"Van Buren, is there no case so low, so vile, so filthy, that you would decline to represent it?"

"I do not know," Van Buren replied, hesitatingly, and quickly approaching his ear close to the lips of the inquirer he whispered: "What have you been doing?"—Hilton: "Fanny Side of Politics."

Matter of Breathing.

Teachers will be interested in the experiments of Dr. Noble, connected with the New York schools. He finds that many boys are vicious looking and bad because they do not breathe properly. One boy who scowled at his teacher and frequently played truant, after a course in breathing lessons became a bright, upright looking boy and fond of school.

Tit for Tat.

"Why was Muggles so angry with his wife?"

"Because she took the money to pay for her new harem skirt that he intended to use for his Turkish del-